

ADDRESSES

OF

HON. CHAS. B. AYCOCK

AND

R. F. BEASLEY, ESQ.,

On the occasion of the unveiling of the
Colonial Column and the Monument
to Captain James Morehead, at
Guilford Battle Ground,
July 4, 1901.

PUBLISHED BY

THE GUILFORD BATTLE GROUND COMPANY,

GREENSBORO, N. C.

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PROGRAM OF THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION AT THE GUILFORD BATTLE GROUND ON JULY THE FOURTH, 1901.

Procession will form on the Salisbury Road at 10:30 in the following order:

DR. CHARLES L. SCOTT, CHIEF MARSHALL, AND ASSISTANTS.

PROXIMITY BAND.

ORATORS OF THE DAY, CHAPLAIN, MASTER OF CEREMONIES AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS IN CARRIAGES.

DIRECTORS AND STOCKHOLDERS OF THE GUILFORD BATTLE GROUND COMPANY.

CITIZENS GENERALLY.

Procession when formed will move to the Grand Stand.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

At the Pavillion.

MUSIC BY THE BAND—"The Old North State."

PRAYER BY THE CHAPLAIN, DR. L. W. CRAWFORD.

ORATION—GOVERNOR AYCOCK.

PRESENTATION OF THE PORTRAIT OF JOSEPH M. MOREHEAD BY THE ARTIST AND DONOR, DAVID CLARK, ESQ., BY HON. ALFRED M. SCALES.

RESPONSE BY DR. CHARLES D. MCIVER.

MUSIC—"The Star Spangled Banner."

Procession Reformed and March to the

CAPTAIN JAMES MOREHEAD MONUMENT AND THE COLONIAL COLUMN

Then to be Unveiled.

ADJOURN TO DINNER.

REASSEMBLE AT PAVILLION AT 2:30 P. M.

MUSIC BY BAND.

ORATION ON THE BATTLE OF ELIZABETHTOWN BY R. F. BEASLEY, ESQ.

GRAND CONCERT BY PROXIMITY BAND.

JAMES W. FORBIS, MASTER OF CEREMONIES.

By transfer

22 Ap '05

The stress of public duties preventing Governor Aycock from giving us a copy of his address for publication, the following extracts from the press are inserted.

The Biblical Recorder, July 10, 1901.

At only one place in North Carolina so far as we know, was the fourth of July—the birthday of Independence—appropriately observed. That was on the Guilford battlefield—a worthy place indeed. There a monument to virtue and and heroism and the spirit of independence was unveiled; and Governor Aycock and Editor Rowland F. Beasley delivered addresses.

North Carolina Christian Advocate, July 10, 1901.

THE GUILFORD BATTLE GROUND CELEBRATION,

* * *

During the colonial period and the Revolutionary War North Carolina was the theatre on which many heroic deeds were enacted and many places within her bounds were made sacred by the valor of her sons.

* * *

The Guilford Battle Ground Company has wisely set apart the fourth of July, the birth of our Nation, as the time for the annual celebration of the battle of Guilford Court House. It has become a day and an occasion that are looked forth to with great interest and every year thousands of people repair hither to commemorate the deeds of the noble men who fought in the Revolutionary war and who met and vanquished the enemy on that bloody field.

In some particulars the exercises on last Thursday were more interesting than on any previous occasion.

Hon. Charles B. Aycock, Governor of the State, was the principal orator, while Mr. R. F. Beasley, Prof. M. H. Holt and President Chas. D. McIver made appropriate addresses. It is the first time in the history of the Association when two granite monuments were unveiled at one time. One of these commemorates the last battle of the Revolutionary war fought within the borders of the State in September, 1781. The other an imposing Colonial Column with four large shields on its sides, sets forth the State's history from May, 1771, to April, 1776, the most heroic period in the history of the Commonwealth.

Too much cannot be said in praise of the men who have done so much to make prominent this historic place and draw to it year after year many of the best people of the State where is kindled anew in their bosoms the fires of patriotism.

We commend their example to others.

* * *

THE GLORIOUS FOURTH.

The Battle Ground Celebration—Speeches by Governor Aycock and Mr. Beasley.

The annual celebration at the Guilford Battle Ground last Thursday attracted a great many people, who greatly enjoyed the exercises of the day. The principal events of the day were an address by Governor Aycock on the colonial history of North Carolina, and one by R. F. Beasley, Esq.

* * *

The Governor spoke of the struggles which went on from the earliest settlement of North Carolina until the people wrested their freedom from British tyranny and oppression. He said while in other sections of America the struggle for liberty was usually begun by the leaders, in North Carolina it was the masses who first took up the fight for individual rights, maintaining the struggle until their representatives were instructed to declare for independence of Great Britain. The first blood of the Revolution was spilled on North Carolina soil, at the battle of Alamance, and the Regulators, who stood there against foreign oppression were not lawbreakers, though they were fierce. But for Alamance, declared the Governor, North Carolina would not have been the first State to pronounce the Declaration of Independence.

In closing his speech the Governor made a strong plea for education, saying this was the only way of maintaining the liberty bequeathed by the fathers.

* * *

Governor Aycock was followed by Mr. R. F. Beasley, editor of the Monroe Journal, formerly editor of the Greensboro Telegram, who delivered a learned and scholarly address on the battle of Elizabethtown, which was fought in Bladen county in September, 1781. This is a portion of important North Carolina history of which little is known, and Mr. Beasley's address displayed much thought and patient research.

After the speaking the beautiful Colonial Column and the monument to Capt. James Morehead were unveiled with appropriate ceremonies. The Colonial Column is the first monument erected to the memory of the men who fought at Alamance and who made memorable the few years just preceding that battle.

* * *

A pleasing incident of the celebration was the presentation by Mr. D. L. Clark, the High Point artist, of a very fine oil painting of Maj. Joseph M. Morehead, the indefatigable vice-president of the Guilford Battle Ground Company. The presentation speech was made by Prof. M. H. Holt, of Oak Ridge. The painting was accepted by Dr. Charles D. McIver.

Judge Schenck, the venerable president of the Guilford Battle Ground Company, was too feeble to attend the exercises.

The Battle of Elizabethtown

By R. F. BEASLEY.

*Speech delivered on the occasion of the Annual Celebration at
the Guilford Battle Ground, July 4, 1901.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

In the large gathering here to-day, in the great speech of your Governor to which you have just listened, and in the ceremony which you are yet to witness, a stranger must read the signs of an auspicious day in North Carolina, a day when the actions and motives of a virtuous people are not only vindicated, but honored in the unveiling of a beautiful structure of granite with its sides emblazoned with tablets of living letters which fitly tell a story of glory more imperishable than the bronze and adamant upon which 'tis written. This day is more auspicious than the similar ones that have gone before, because it is the culmination of the things we have done before. To-day, for the first time, we extend the circle of our endeavors and bring within its scope some men whose deeds have not only been too much unhonored and unsung, but who have actually been regarded by some of our so-called historians as extremely suspicious characters.

On any day some fifteen years ago, if a traveler had been venturesome enough to attempt to pass the tangle of the "Old Salisbury road" he might have seen somewhere on this field a stoutly-made man, robust in body and with a strong face, denoting remarkable mental activity, busily engaged with a score of laborers in clearing underbrush, measuring distances, marking lines or laying out avenues. That man you all know. It was Judge David Schenck, to-day the honored president of your company, and he has nobly served you, not only in the work done on this field, but in the writing of a book of sledge-hammer facts and logic which has forever swept away an unworthy charge against North Carolina's honor.

But upon this field again could have been seen the figure of another worker; it was upon a spot in front of where I now stand, midway between Greene's Virginia militia and his Continental troops, and it was but the 16th of last May—the fig-

ure was that of Major Joseph M. Morehead*, who was busily engaged in completing the turving around yon grand Colonial Column, perhaps the handsomest monument in the State and one of the handsomest anywhere. To that tireless citizen of Greensboro we owe that great achievement in monument building and also to him do we owe the fact that after a century and a quarter of either obscurity or misrepresentation, the Regulators and their motives and the consequences of their actions are understood and properly published to the world†. I have said that to-day we have enlarged the scope of our celebration. Do you know that upon this good day, we are enabled to properly celebrate upon this field the first battle of the Revolution, the first American victory in that war, one of the decisive battles, and the last engagement on the soil of our State—Alamance, Moore's Creek, Guilford Court House and Elizabethtown? The work of the two gentlemen whom I have named represents the beginning and the realization of the possibility of this day. That is why I say this hour is doubly auspicious. What reflections must crowd upon the minds of the patriotic citizens gathered here to-day!

Who has not asked himself the question, "Why do we build monuments?" And who of the many visitors that come to this place from Maine to California do not look upon the shafts here and ask themselves why it all is? Is it for the dead that we build? What care these heroes whose bones sleep on forgotten fields whether their names be written on brass or marble?

"Can storied urn or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?"

Why should it not be said of each that—

"We carved not a line,
And we raised not a stone,
But left him alone in his glory?"

Ah, we make statues and write history that the glorious dead may yet speak to the living; that those whose deeds have wrought good to race or country may bring their message to us as they gave it to their contemporaries, thus being

* It should not be inferred that this was Major Morehead's first service in this cause. Since its incipency he has been, year in and year out, tireless in the cause of the Guilford Battle Ground, spending his money, time and labor freely in its behalf. His last work is but the crowning effort of past achievement.

† Major Morehead is the author of a most reliable historical pamphlet, here referred to—"James Hunter, General of the Regulators."

"heirs of all the ages," we have before our eyes for emulation the cumulative virtue and wisdom of the centuries. We build monuments for the honor of the past, for the inspiration of the present, and for the protection of the future. Monument-making is an ethical force. It is ethical, because, in North Carolina, at least, we build only to the great or the good; and their virtues are thus inculcated in the young. "The portraits and statues of the honored dead," says Edward Everett, "kindle the generous ambition of the youthful aspirants to fame. Themistocles could not sleep for the trophies in the Ceramicus; and when the living Demothenes had ceased to speak the stony lips remained to rebuke and exhort his degenerate countrymen. We can never look on the portrait of Washington, but his serene and noble countenance, perpetuated by the chisel and the pencil, is familiar to far greater multitudes than ever stood in his living presence, and will be thus familiar to the latest generations." Macauley's lone fisherman may one day mend his nets upon the deserted banks of the Thames, but when will the picture of Good Queen Bess riding among her small band of sailors and exhorting them to hurl back the all-powerful Spanish Armada fade from the mind of the race that would esteem heroic action? Some day we may cease to hear the throb of the war drum, but when shall we cease to point proudly to the record of a warrior like Robert E. Lee and glory in his unblemished character, his tender sympathy, his knightly courage, his gallant bearing and his unswerving devotion? When Napoleon bade his soldiers remember that from the pyramids forty centuries looked down upon them, he voiced the fact that the greatest incentive to noble action in the present is the desire to be worthy of the noble actions of the past.

What father, as he passes over this battlefield, will not strive harder to instil into his son's mind and heart the lessons of virtue and patriotism which here open so abundantly before him? Let the youth of our land be brought to spots like these and be taught the love of country and devotion to the public good, the majesty of liberty and the sacredness of law, the greatness of unselfishness and the beneficence of high ideals. At this shrine of patriotism let them drink in the fact that they are of the present as these heroes were of the past; that to each lot some duty falls; that none who shrink are worthy, and that while no invading enemy is now threatening and may never again threaten our country, there are daily calls to duty, to unselfishness and devotion to the public good. Let them understand that when from the fathers they inherited the freedom and glory of a great country they assumed the obligation to transmit them undefiled. Infuse into them

these truths and you have a generation of men, who, when the crises come, will meet them in whatever form presented as the men of these hills met British invasion. Tell me not that we cannot thus rear our youth, and tell me not that when so reared they will be recreant to any public trust or liberty-given responsibility. Tell me not that a people nurtured and reared in the spirit of freedom will fail to act as that spirit dictates when the nation comes, in its larger life, to the solution of questions which are thrust upon it as the freest and grandest country on the globe, or that we shall extend our ministrations to other peoples except as a benediction. The freedom and greatness of our country are in the hearts of its people as they were in the hearts of the heroes who sleep here, and no earthly power can dislodge them. Then let us, descendants of worthy sires, as we meet in the very shadows of their glory, draw determination from their record and resolve to do what duty and country demand of us, and not only shall our country live, but its glory and blessings shall encompass the earth. There is no place in the economy of the universe for selfishness, either in men or nations, and God never opened the windows of heaven and showered so profusely his blessings upon this country that we might enjoy them alone and do nothing for His creatures in the benighted sections of the world. The idea that patriotism is enmity to other nations is wrong. Rome died because her patriotism became petrified into national and individual selfishness. England lives to-day because she learned well the lesson taught her on this very field, reversed her policy and became a real mother to her colonies instead of a tyrant over them. To-day the sun never sets on her possessions and the only cords that bind them are those of love.

Standing to-day in the shadow of the past, recollecting the sacred blood that has been consecrated to our country's cause, and appreciating the dangers, responsibilities and opportunities of the present, I declare to you that we should not look with pessimistic eye to the future of our country, but should gaze upon its rising sun with hope, determination and patriotic fervor.

To-day we meet principally to unveil the Colonial Column. This is a great event, for so late as the 12th of last month a distinguished jurist and historian of this State was able to say truthfully in a speech before the Teachers' Assembly that so far nowhere had a monument in honor of Alamanca and the grand years just preceding the final outbreak of the Revolution been unveiled. The same distinguished citizen spoke earnestly for the perpetuation of our history by means of the painter's brush and the sculptor's chisel. That

policy we are endeavoring to carry out here, and it is that policy that must vivify our history and endear it to our people who do not have the time or inclination to go to the musty volumes of old print. In consonance with this policy I am proud to inform you that not only do we to-day unveil the Colonial Column, but another monument also. This is one erected to the memory of Captain James Morehead of the Tenth North Carolina Continental line, by Col. James T. and Major Joseph M. Morehead and Capt. R. Percy Gray. May their example of honoring a revolutionary kinsman be followed by others.

I desire to ask this vast audience not to allow the lesser event of the day to be swallowed up wholly in the greater, and that you may not, I submit some remarks in connection with the record of him to whom this monument is dedicated. Of this true American whose memory is yet so dear to his kinsmen that they, after a century, thus honor his name, we know little. The men of his day were too busy laying the foundations of our commonwealth to take time to write history, and, as is always true, the immediate descendants were careless. All too many of even the names of gallant men of that day have been forgotten. Many of the bravest of the brave have no scratch of pen to tell of their services. To-day in some obscure manuscript we see that a certain man of that time did a valiant deed for his country, worthy of immortal renown, and to-morrow we see that he fell and was buried in an unmarked grave, and that is all that we may find recorded.

Captain James Morehead was born in 1750 and died in 1815, and his bones probably rest in the old family burying ground in Richmond county. Tradition says that he was a "thin, tall man, of mild and amiable temper," and he was a bachelor. We know that he was appointed lieutenant in the Tenth North Carolina Continental Line on March 23, 1779, and that he subsequently became captain. He went to South Carolina with the nine-months men under Sumner, and was in the battle of Stono, near Charleston, June 20, 1779, and that he was in the battle of Elizabethtown in Bladen county in 1781. We also know that Captain Morehead stood high in the estimation of his countrymen after the war, because he represented his county in the General Assembly about 1797. In those days only the wisest men and those of the highest character were sent to the Legislature, and it was not unusual for retired governors, senators, foreign ambassadors and judges, of the greatest note to be sent time and again to represent their counties in the Legislature. The very next monument that should be erected upon this field should be to the distinguished soldier, states-

man, diplomat and member of the Legislature, William R. Davie, and then will be completed a set of tablets to that gallant quartette who fought together—Sumner, Dixon, Morehead and Davie.

I digress here a moment to heartily congratulate Major Morehead on his adoption of the particular forms, or designs of the two memorials about to be unveiled. The first is a solid granite, a tent 5x5x5 feet in length, breadth and height and weighs about ten thousand pounds. This form, so far as I know, is absolutely unique and its selection for a stone upon this famous battle field, is strikingly appropriate for

“On fame’s eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread.”

I have said that Captain Morehead was in the remarkable battle of Elizabethtown, and in that gallant struggle I am sure he bore an important part. Unfortunately we have had no adequate history of this action of vast importance, not because of the number engaged, but on account of the valor of the patriot band and of the results attained. In keeping with the idea that addresses on the annual celebration here shall be of historic interest, I shall attempt to give you a short account of this struggle. The time at my disposal has not been sufficient to allow me to master the details of the fight, as I hope to do later and to publish for their intrinsic worth, but by the aid of Colonel Hamilton McMillan, of Red Springs, a gentleman who has engaged much in patriotic research, I am enabled to give the general facts relative thereto. This was one of the most important of the many struggles that occurred in our State between the Whigs and Tories, and as King’s Mountain and Ramsour’s Mill previously had paralyzed Tory spirit in the West, so this action freed a large section in the east from the most galling of Tory oppression.

During the Revolution North Carolina patriots were constantly called upon to be prepared to repel invasion of their own State, to help their sister States, to furnish levies for the Continental armies, and to keep down disaffection at home. Added to these they were compelled to make subsistence for themselves and their families on their farms and to largely or wholly supply the armies. The East particularly suffered, especially during the time our troops were engaged with the enemy in South Carolina and in the repelling invasion in the West. At the time of the battle of Elizabethtown, though Cornwallis had left the State for Virginia, the British were in possession of Wilmington, and the Tories held Fayetteville. Some idea of the general state of the country may be had at

this time when the patriotic troops had left the State to rescue South Carolina and Georgia when it is remembered that a band of Tories boldly went to Hillsboro and captured Governor Burke and his council and other officials and carried them as prisoners to Wilmington. The eastern country was harassed beyond measure by the British from Wilmington and the Tories of the section acting under their protection. These eastern counties had an unusually large per cent. of loyalists, and no doubt many real friends of liberty were terrorized into activity. That section was filled with Scotch of very recent immigration. These Scotch had as an alternative to remaining in Europe and suffering the penalties of treason to the British crown, come to America. They naturally enough had quite a wholesome dread of England's power. Besides they naturally doubtless had absolutely no confidence in the ability of the people to govern themselves, nor had they had the taste of freedom and the self reliance born of having been in America for one or nearly two hundred years. They constituted the Tory army to Moore's Creek Bridge. I have made the following extracts from letters and documents written in the year 1781 to show the distressed condition of the lower counties and their subjection to and persecution by the British and Tories. These will also be seen to bear out the truthfulness of the story of the battle which I shall read you :

Colonel Thos. Brown to General Lillington, from Elizaheth-town, February 19th :

"I enclose you Colonel Emmett's letter to inform you how infamously the Newbern district hath behaved, and, I am told, chiefly on account of Capt. Thomas. I will guard the river on account of the baggage and as far as lies in my power, but the greatest part of the people in this county is engaged back against the Tories, and seems very loath to go against the British and leave their families exposed to a set of villains who daily threaten their destruction."

Captain Geo. Doherty to General Sumner, from Duplin, June 22nd :

"I embrace the opportunity of Colonel Kenan's going to the Assembly to inform you that the tumults in this part of the country have been the cause of the draft and everything relative thereto, being, I suppose, later and more out of order here than in any other section of the State. We have at present some little respite from the cursed Tories, but cannot say that they are entirely subdued. The draft was made in Dup-

lin, but the more than half of them have been among the Tories or the so disaffected that they will not appear. The number that we ought to have here is about 70 men and there is not yet above 24 appeared and about 20 from Onslow. The men have been so harassed by being kept in arms, that heretofore they could not attend to providing the clothing required by law, and without clothing the troops cannot march, as not one among them has got a second change and some have hardly duds to cover them."

General Sumner to General Greene, from Camp, July 25th :

"Major Craig at Wilmington continues his ravages for 30 or 40 miles up the Cape Fear with little or no opposition. His Excellency, the Governor, a few days since, sent me orders to march all the drafts collected to Duplin county, but sir, it was so incompatible with my orders and at that time I was not joined by Major Dixon with the Hillsboro drafts, neither has those from Edenton come up."

General Drayton to Governor Burke, 12 miles from Cross Creek, July 6th :

"Craig, as I have already mentioned, has ordered the men of Bladen county to be in arms by such a time and it is supposed for establishing posts at Elizabeth and Cross Creek. Out of fifteen companies in the county I am informed 12 incline for Craig. Still there are a number of men not wanting that are willing to endeavor to prevent such step of the enemy proceeding, but sir, they are at a loss for a head."

Colonel Kenan to Governor Burke, from Duplin, July 6th :

"I hope your excellency will order assistance to this part of the country, otherwise good people here will be under the necessity of giving up in order to save their property if possible, but this will be the last step taken."

Colonel Kenan to Governor Burke, from Duplin, July 9th :

"I am much afraid the enemy will penetrate into this county before we shall receive any re-inforcement, as I am told Colonel Linton is ordered to the westward. I hope your excellency will be mindful of this distressed part of the country."

Isaac Williams to General Caswell, from Cape Fear, July 22nd :

"I have heard nearly the same as I wrote you before, that there is between two and five hundred of the Tories on

or near the Raft ——— embodied. We had a muster on Monday last, when the third and fourth number was ordered to meet in order to march after the Tories, but there was neither officers nor men met, only eight or ten. The colonel never came at all."

Colonel Jno. Kenan to Governor Burke, July 15th :

"The enemy has moved out of Wilmington up to the Long Bridge and are rebuilding, it is said by several gentlemen who have left the town. Their intention is to give no more paroles and will sell every man's property who will not join them and become British subjects."

Colonel Kenan to Governor Burke, from Duplin, August 2nd :

"I am now convinced that this county with several others will be over-run with the British and Tories."

General Greene to Governor Burke, from Headquarters on the Santee, August 12th :

"I perfectly agree with you in opinion that the best way of silencing the Tories is by routing the enemy from Wilmington, for while they have footing there the Tories will receive such encouragement as to keep their hopes and expectations alive, and their incursions will be continued. Nor will it be in your power to crush them with all the force you can raise, as they act in small parties, and appear in so many different shapes, and have so many different hiding places and secret springs of intelligence that you may wear out an army and still be unable to subdue them."

This was the deplorable state of affairs when the action of Elizabethtown occurred on the 29th of September, 1781. Wheeler says that the battle was fought some time in July, without giving a definite date, and that the Whigs were commanded by General Brown. Both of these statements are wrong. Honorable Hamilton McMillan has proven conclusively that the fight occurred September 29th and that the leader was Colonel Thomas Roberson. Mr. McMillan has kindly procured for me a perfectly authenticated manuscript written in 1845 by Robert E. Troy, a prominent lawyer of his day, living in Lumberton. The manuscript was written at the dictation of James Cain, a Revolutionary veteran who was in the battle which he describes. By the aid of Mr. McMillan, I think every statement of this account, with the exception of an immaterial one, can be proven true, and since it is entirely unknown to North Carolinians, and as it gives a very graphic account of the battle, I cannot do better than to read it to you, in lieu of any transcription of its facts.

CAIN'S ACCOUNT.

Copy of a letter written by Robert E. Troy, Esq., to The Fayetteville Observer, March 12, 1845, telling of an interview with James Cain, of Bladen county, N. C., a Revolutionary veteran, who relates the history of the battle of Elizabethtown, fought September 29, 1781 :

LUMBERTON, N. C., March 12, 1845.

DEAR SIR : It has been a matter of regret that the events of the revolutionary war in North Carolina, while they exhibited some of the most brilliant feats of daring and chivalrous courage which distinguished that contest with the mother country, have almost entirely escaped the notice of the historians who have attempted to transmit to posterity a record of that interesting and eventful period. And who has not deeply and painfully felt that regret, as some greyhaired veteran of the Revolution, with all the interest and fidelity of an eyewitness and a participant, narrated the particulars of some bold adventure, or some wild and dangerous enterprise, when bravery and conduct supplied the place of numbers, as he reflects that those acts, which, in the dark ages of knight-errantry, would have won for those who were engaged in them the highest glory, will soon pass into oblivion and be forgotten forever?

Under the influence of such feelings as those, I have taken the liberty of sending you the following account of the "Battle of Elizabethtown" which I received in almost the very words in which I have given it from one (perhaps the only living witness) who was present and who fought bravely for liberty on that and every other occasion, when fortune gave him opportunity. It is impossible to hear him as he relates with eloquence and truth, the trials, the dangers and privations of those dark and turbulent times and doubt for a moment the authenticity of his statement; he speaks as one who knows and feels—"Quaeque ipse miserrima vidi, et quorum magna pars fui."

Some time during the summer of 1781 or 1782, my informant could not tell with certainty which, but he rather inclined to the belief that it was 1781, about 400 Tories under Slingsby established their quarters at Elizabethtown and about 500 more under Colonel Fanning four miles above at a place called Brompton on the river. Both the leaders and most of the men were "wicked Tories." There were, however, some true Whigs in principle who had been forced to take up arms against their country, and who were called in the language of that time "signed Tories."

From these two points they ravaged the country in every direction, insulting and plundering the most respectable families, burning several private dwellings, wantonly destroying a great quantity of valuable property and committing upon the defenceless inhabitants outrages of the most horrible and barbarous nature.

There were in the neighborhood 180 Whigs under the command of Colonel Thomas Robeson, who felt themselves too weak to either attack the Tories in a body and avenge the wrongs they daily suffered or to protect their homes from the depredations of the remorseless marauders. Colonel Thomas Brown, the regular commanding officer of the Whigs, had been wounded a short time before in a skirmish with the British regulars near Wilmington, and was unable to continue in active service. Colonel Robeson had no commission at that time, (his former commission having expired) and he volunteered to take command at the request of Colonel Brown and the Whigs generally, during the absence of that officer in consequence of the wounds he had received. These 180 men remained lurking in the swamps and thickets for three weeks, hoping for reinforcements and watching for opportunities of cutting off detached parties of Tories; they could not, however, get a shot at a single Tory, nor did they obtain one recruit. They then resolved to endeavor to enlist the feelings of their fellow Whigs in the adjoining counties, and marched through Duplin, Johnston, Wake, Chatham and the upper corner of Cumberland. In these counties, though they found many friends and were kindly received and hospitably entertained at almost every place where they made their appearance, and three general musters were called to supply them with the necessary re-enforcements, yet they could not find a man who was willing to join them and march against the Tories. Such was the general consternation and so great was the terror of the names of Fanning and Slingsby, that all men so far from the scene of suffering chose rather to stay at home and take care of themselves and families than thus, as they conceived, to voluntarily throw themselves into the lion's clutches.

It was now six weeks since Colonel Robeson and his men set out on their recruiting expedition, and when they returned to Duplin (now Sampson) they found instead of having increased their numbers, that, with those who had deserted and those who had obtained leave of absence upon furlough, they had only 71 men, all of the original company which had left the Cape Fear. They were all mounted and all had guns, but many of their horses were worn to the bone, and in all the bones seemed to stick through the skin. The knees, el-

bows and shoulders of a great many of the men were exposed and some had not even a change of clothes. In that plight, worn out and dispirited, they arrived at the house of Gabriel Holmes, a true Whig and a fervent friend of liberty. Here Colonel Robeson announced to his little band his determination to return home and disperse the Tories or perish in the attempt, and called upon all who were willing to go with him in this desperate undertaking to step forward. At the word every man advanced but one. They had been occasionally informed during their route by messengers going and returning between this patriotic band and their homes, that the Tories had grown every day more bold and unscrupulous by impunity and that their outrages and insults had become literally intolerable. These 70 men, scantily supplied with ammunition, without clothes and without provisions, and broken down with a long march, set out early one morning to give battle to the same 400 whom they felt too weak to encounter when they had three times their present number and were all fresh and well supplied with provisions and all necessities of war. After a forced march of two days through a country laid waste and deserted or only occupied by a few unfriendly inhabitants, they reached the bank of the river opposite the village of Elizabethtown undiscovered about dusk on the evening of the 28th of September. Since they left the house of Mr. Holmes the men had not eaten one morsel of anything whatever and the horses had only eaten what grass they could get as they halted along the road two or three times during the march to rest them and let them graze. Having reached the river, they again halted to take a few hours repose, and wait for the hour of attack. The moon shown nearly all night; just as she was going down about an hour before day, they again put themselves in motion. One man was left to take care of the horses. Sixty-nine undressed and waded the river. The water was "breast deep." They then resumed their clothes and prepared their guns for action. The men were separated into three companies, 25 men in each, and with the stillness of death they approached the Tory quarters from three directions at a time. The signal for attack was to be the first gun that was fired by a Tory sentinel; the orders were then to pay no attention to the sentinels, but at the discharge of the first gun, which was to be the signal of attack, each party was to rush up, and at the command of its leader, fire right into the midst of the Tories. My informant was in the party which was first hailed by the sentinel. "Stand; who goes there?" was repeated three times, but the little band of twenty-three men continued steadily and silently advancing, like a dark shadaw, without pay-

ing the least attention to the summons. The sentinel then fired his gun into the air and instead of retreating to the main body fled into the woods. In an instant the Whigs poured into the midst of the alarmed and unprepared Tories a volley which threw them into complete disorder. It was now perfectly dark, nothing could be seen but the constant flash of the Whig guns and the half-naked Tories as they sprang from their slumbers and rushed to and fro in every direction, seeking some place of refuge from the devouring wrath of their adversaries. The watch-word was "Washington" and as it was shouted from man to man and from rank to rank among the Whigs, completed the panic and consternation which the first discharge of the Whigs had begun, and the unhappy Tories conceived that the "Father of his Country," with all his host, was upon them, and that they were surrounded and that nothing remained but for every man to be presently cut to pieces. Most of them plunged headlong into the deep ravine which has since been called the "Tory Hole" and the rest ran for their lives into the neighboring thickets and none of them stopped until they had placed many miles between them and the terrible visitors who had so unceremoniously disturbed their rest on that awful night.

When the battle was over and the Tories were completely dispersed the day had just dawned. Seventeen of the Tories, among them their leader, Colonel Slingsby, were left dead on the field. Not one of the Whigs was killed and but four wounded, who were William Glover, Matthew White, James Singletary and James Cain. The Whigs then supplied themselves with what arms and ammunition they could carry and returned in triumph to the other side of the river, and marched across Colly Swamp where they encamped. It was now the third day since they had taken a mouthful of food, and so far from being worn out or defeated the brave old patriot, who gave me this account, declared he never saw a more jovial or active band in his life. "In fact" he said, "I will tell you the truth, I was so over-joyed that I did not feel the cravings of hunger any more than if I had just risen from the best meal I ever ate, and if I could have lived always just as I felt then I do not know that I would have eaten another mouthful again."

The power of Tories was completely broken and they never made headway in that part of the country afterwards.

Among many amusing anecdotes of the terror of the Tories on that occasion he relates the following: "One poor fellow, at the first round which was fired by the Whigs, threw away his musket and rushed, frightened out of his wits, into the nearest thicket. He continued his flight till he reached

his home in the upper part of Robeson (then Bladen) county, only stopping to beg the necessary refreshments and relate the horrors of the awful onslaught from which he had just so narrowly escaped, and which he described as terrific in the extreme, for he declared the first thing he knew Washington had completely surrounded them with the whole Continental army and that they had all been massacred and that he supposed that he was the only man who had made his escape, which he only did by cutting his way through the thick files of the American Regulars. He mentioned the name of one man who fell on his right, of another on his left and of one whose dead body he jumped over as he broke through the hostile ranks. He said that he had passed within fifteen steps of the mouth of a cannon, which they snapped at him as he ran and which, if it had fired, would have blown him to atoms, but luckily for him and the cause of King George, the cannon snapped and he left. ' "Y.,"

Was braver deed ever written in the annals of war or chivalry? But other ones of equal valor may be found in the glorious history of our State. "Time," says Emerson, "dissipates into shining ether the solid angularity of facts." Fellow-citizens, I appeal to you to study the story of our past, gather up the neighborhood legends and traditions as well as the larger events before they are all dissipated into shining ether, and teach them to the young. It has been said that "national recollection is the foundation of national character." My effort to-day has failed if it has not impressed upon your minds that fact, and more than that, all the work done here and your annual celebrations will be for naught, if by them our history is not clarified and made dear to the present and future generations. And in the work of illuminating the present by the lamp of our history, the Guilford Battle Ground Company has been and must continue to be a pioneer.

This spot must be our Revolutionary Pantheon, dedicated not to mythical gods and goddesses, but to the memory of the heroes who conceived under the King's wrath and won in the teeth of the King's army, the right to control their own destiny as a free people. Here we must keep brightly burning the constant vestal fires of patriotism, and here our countrymen from less favored sections of the State may make pious but joyful pilgrimage and kindle afresh within their bosoms the sacred flame. Here, "the high water mark of British invasion of North Carolina," shall be the high water mark of our constant endeavor to write the name and fame of every worthy hero and enterprise of the great fight of North Carolina as leader in the Revolution. Twelve or fifteen years

ago, when the originator of the idea to wrest this field from the riotous brush and briar began his patriotic labors, even his vigorous imagination did not stretch its flight to conceive of such magnificent results as have been attained in the beautification of these grounds. But as the work progressed and the plan and effort unfolded themselves, ambitious designs lent speed to the thought of him and his helpers, till now, behold the magnificent work of their hands! Much work still remains for patriotic private hands. That work is to continue to care for and build to this park till such time as the general government, having learned from the "philosophy of history," that Yorktown was a sequence of Guilford Court House, and that no spot in this broad land is so favorable for a tangible acknowledgment of those blessings of freedom which followed the successful termination of that war, as this one, shall thankfully receive from this company the work that it has done and pledge itself to construct and maintain here a magnificent national military park. Sometime this may be, if not, well and good, North Carolina, ever foremost in patriotic endeavor, will continue to care for it. In the ownership of this spot the people of Greensboro and Guilford county have a priceless possession. Many of these people are the descendants of the men who fought here, and both by reason of this and their proximity to the grounds, they are peculiarly its guardians. And so let them continue the good work which their Schenck began and has carried on so nobly, and to which their devoted Morehead has added lustre. Men of Greensboro, the national government may do much, but it has not; the State of North Carolina does something and may or may not do more, but you have done great things and must do greater.

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